

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 HA-05 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 TRSE-00
OMB-01 /084 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5562
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 05441

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINR, EAID, CG, BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN REACTION TO ZAIRE EXECUTIONS

1. SUMMARY. BELGIAN GOVERNMENT RECEIVES THE NEWS OF
THE 13 EXECUTIONS IN KINSHASA WITH "SURPRISE AND CON-
STERNATION" AND ASKS MOBUTU FOR "CLARIFICATION" OF
ZAIRE'S ACTIONS, INCLUDING ALLEGATIONS OF BELGIAN INTER-
VENTION IN ZAIRE'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. FOREIGN MINISTER
SIMONET TELLS FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA (AND THE PRESS)
THAT THE "TRAGEDY" FRIDAY MORNING IN KINSHASA UNDERLINES
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THE PRESSING NEED TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF ZAIRE SOLVE
THEIR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND THAT BELGIUM PLANS TO CON-
TINUE HELP WITH THE MOBUTU PLAN. END SUMMARY.

2. WE GOT A DETAILED READ-OUT MARCH 18 FROM FOREIGN
MINISTER'S CHEF DE CABINET (CAHEN) AND HIS DEPUTY
(ONKELINX) ON BELGIAN PLANS VIS-A-VIS ZAIRE FOLLOWING

THE MARCH 17 EXECUTIONS IN KINSHASA. THEY TOLD US WHAT TRANSPIRED AT AFTERNOON MARCH 17 MEETING BETWEEN SIMONET AND FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA AND GAVE US A COPY OF SIMONET'S PUBLIC STATEMENT CLEARED BY PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS AND RELEASED AFTER THE UMBA MEETING (TEXT SEPTTEL).

3. CAHEN TOLD US THAT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT VIEWS EXECUTIONS IN KINSHASA AS "TERRIBLY TRAGIC SIGNAL" THAT THE PEOPLE OF ZAIRE NEED HELP TO FREE THEMSELVES OF ECONOMIC DISORDER AND ATTENDANT SOCIAL MISERY. THE POLITICAL INSTABILITY THAT LED TO FRIDAY'S EXECUTIONS IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF THESE ECONOMIC DISORDERS AND THIS REINFORCES BELGIAN CONVICTION THAT THE PEOPLE OF ZAIRE - WHATEVER THE GOVERNMENT IN POWER - MUST BE HELPED IN ORDER TO AVOID FUTURE, MORE SERIOUS POLITICAL DISTURBANCES. THEREFORE, BELGIUM IS PREPARED TO CONTINUE HELPING ZAIRE WITH THE MOBUTU PLAN, BUT REQUIRES GOZ "CLARIFICATION" OF ITS POLICY TOWARDS BELGIUM, INCLUDING THE ALLEGATIONS OF BELGIAN INTERVENTION IN ZAIRIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. CAHEN SAID THIS WAS THRUST OF SIMONET'S MESSAGE TO UMBA, AND THAT AMBASSADOR RITTWEGER DE MOOR HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO SAY THE SAME THING TO MOBUTU. HE SAID THAT UMBA ASSURED SIMONET THAT THE FOREIGN EMBASSY REFERRED TO IN MOBUTU'S TELEVISED SPEECH WAS THE LIBYAN.
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4. CAHEN SAID THAT THE INITIAL PRESS REACTION IN BRUSSELS TO THE EXECUTIONS WAS "RESTRAINED" AND THAT HE THOUGHT POLITICAL PRESSURE TO SCRAP BELGIAN SUPPORT FOR THE MOBUTU PLAN WAS MANAGEABLE. CAHEN ADDED THAT THE REACTION OF BELGIUM'S PARTNERS IN THE MOBUTU PLAN IS CRUCIAL TO SUCCESS OF PLAN AND TO BELGIAN CONSULTATION SCENARIO. HE SAID BELGIANS WOULD BE CLOSELY WATCHING INTERNATIONAL REACTION AND SPECIFICALLY THE U.S. RESPONSE. IN THIS REGARD, HE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG DURING LATTER'S BRIEF BRUSSELS STOPOVER IN BRUSSELS EN ROUTE TO LUSAKA (TOWELL-SWING TELCON).

5. AS FOR MOBUTU PLAN SCENARIO AND TIMING, CAHEN TOLD US THAT BELGIANS ARE STILL PRESSING BOKANA TO COME UP WITH HIS NEW MOBUTU PLAN DRAFT. ONKELINX EXPECTED THAT BOKANA WOULD THEN SEND DRAFT DIRECTLY TO FRIENDS AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS RATHER THAN THROUGH BELGIANS. SUCCESS OF IMF MISSION TO KINSHASA AT THE END OF MARCH IS STILL CRUCIAL TO MOVING FORWARD WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION EFFORT ON THE MOBUTU PLAN, AND IMF DIRECTOR

WITTEVEEN WILL BE IN BRUSSELS WEEK OF MARCH 20 FOR
TALKS. ONKELINX STILL ENVISIONS THE CONVENING OF A
BRUSSELS WORKING LEVEL MEETING TOWARDS THE END OF APRIL.

6. COMMENT: BELGIAN GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO HAVE DECIDED
THAT IT IS IN BELGIUM'S INTEREST TO CONTINUE MOBUTU
PLAN COOPERATION WITH ZAIRE ONCE APPROPRIATE

CLARIFICATIONS ARE FORTHCOMING. THEY THINK THEY CAN HANDLE
BELGIAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL BACKLASH BUT ARE UNDERSTANDABLY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BRUSSELS 05441

WATCHING REACTION OF THEIR POTENTIAL MOBUTU PLAN PARTNERS
FOR ANY SIGNS THAT MOBUTU PLAN MAY BE JEOPARDIZED BY
EXECUTIONS OR THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION SCENARIO
MAY HAVE TO BE ALTERED.

7. INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET'S
MARCH 17 STATEMENT ON ZAIRE FOLLOWS SEPTTEL. CHAMBERS

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